



Understanding and Managing Stress

Lesson Overview

Clients will learn how to identify and manage stress better.

Rationale

Stress management helps create a healthy lifestyle.

Goals

To have clients decrease their personal stress levels.

Objectives

- Clients will learn what causes stress in their own lives.
- Clients will identify their personal stress triggers.
- Clients will keep a record of stressful feelings.

Lesson

Sometimes we react to stress without even knowing it.



Pour soda into glass and place the glass on the cookie sheet or pie pan.

Sometimes we are feeling a lot of pressure at work,



Drop a pinch of salt in the soda.

at home,



Drop another pinch of salt in the soda.

personal stress,



Drop another pinch of salt in the soda.



Time

1 1/2 hours

Preparation

- Read through the lesson

Materials Needed

- 8 ounces of soda, 8 ounce clear glass, salt, pie pan or cookie sheet to put the glass on.
- Pen or pencil
- Flip chart or chalk board if in a group setting

Handouts

- The Stress Reaction
- Stress Diary
- What Do You Think?

Understanding and Managing Stress

not to mention the other stresses of traffic, phones, family and others.



Drop a few more pinches of salt in the soda.

And if we are not careful, this stress will build up inside of us, and we will soon “boil over” just like this soda. Without a release, we may blow!*

Quite often you hear people talking about stress. They say “I’m so stressed,” “my kids are stressing me out,” “my boss just added a ton of stress to my life.” But what is stress? How do we define stress?

Stress can occur when a person is confronted by new situations and does not have any experience to pull from. For instance, if you are asked to do a job for which you have not been trained, you may feel a certain level of stress. The DEMANDS of the situation do not meet the RESOURCES or KNOWLEDGE that you have. In other words, you may feel overwhelmed because you don’t know what to do in this situation. There is nothing wrong with this—in fact it can be quite exciting. . . but it may cause you to feel an initial level of discomfort—or stress!

So the key is to keep situations exciting and challenging without them becoming overwhelming. Controlling stress—or managing stress—means keeping stress within challenging and exciting limits—so that you feel good rather than overwhelmed and unworthy.



Pause for questions. Ask client(s) if they understand the concept of stress. If not, provide other examples of stressful situations—like not being prepared for an interview, having too many projects due at the same time. Ask clients for examples of times when they have felt stressed because they didn’t feel like they knew what they were doing.

Before we talk about ways to manage stress, let’s look at other stress triggers. Sometimes we feel stressed when people around us are stressed. An example might be if there are lay-offs at work. You may feel a certain level of stress because of the stress that surrounds you. Has your husband, child or partner ever been stressed, and you felt stressed even though the cause did not directly affect you?

Timing is also very important when it comes to stress. If you are going through a divorce, there are lay-offs at work, and you haven’t slept well for days, stress will affect you more than if you slept well, had a secure job, and if your relationships were in order.

Let’s look at some of the physiological effects of stress. When your body is stressed, it literally feels like it is under attack (Selye’s GAS Theory). Once you feel stress, your body goes into alarm mode. It literally gets ready to fight or run away.



Pass out the Stress Reaction handout. Use the handout to review the different stages of stress and its affect on your body.

* This activity was adapted from “From Mad to Worse,” 1998.

When your body first senses stress, your blood pressure begins to rise. This is ok, but when your blood pressure stays high for a long period of time—like when you are under a lot of stress for a long period of time—your body starts to break down. This is when your body starts resisting (the second arrow). At this point you are more likely to develop ulcers, high blood pressure, and asthma. You are more likely to get colds and keep them for a long time. Have you ever had a cold for over two or three weeks? When you think back on it now, were you under a lot of stress at the time?

When your body has stayed like this for a long time, it begins to reach this final stage—the stage of exhaustion (point to the third arrow). This is the time when your body really starts to wear down. You may begin developing serious diseases at this point. That is why you want to manage stress- to prevent it from reaching this point of total exhaustion!

Again, pause for questions. Before continuing, make sure clients understand the stages of stress and the effects of stress on their bodies.

So now that you know what causes stress, you need to know how to manage stress. This is where you can take control. You can control stress by changing your behaviors, changing the way you think about a situation, making a decision, gathering information, and believing that you can control it.

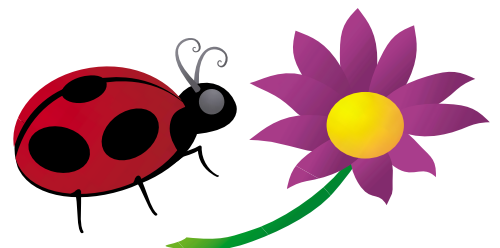
Ask clients what stresses they have in their lives and write their answers on the flip chart or chalkboard. Label this list “Stress.”

Some of the major stress triggers are family, the community (which includes your job), the environment (traffic, pollution, being over-crowded), and internal conflicts like when you want to quit smoking but just can't seem to do it.

Things that stress you out may also happen on a daily basis--like going to a job a you don't like. This is where controllability comes in. You need to refocus your energy from what you cannot control to what you can control. Let's look at a few ways you can take control.

You can take control by changing your attitude. You can go to work knowing you may have an over-bearing boss, but at least you have a secure job.

On the flip chart or chalkboard, write “Ways To Take Control.” Under the title, write “attitude.”



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You may decide to gather more information so that you can make an informed decision. For instance, you may be able to transfer to another department. You may also find out about other opportunities that interest you.



On the flip chart or chalkboard, write “gather more information.”

Another way you can take control is by changing your behavior. For instance, if your boss is always mad at you in the morning because you are 15 minutes late, try leaving the house 15- 20 minutes earlier.



Write “change behaviors” on the flip chart or chalk board.

You can also take control by making a decision. For instance, if you are truly unhappy with your job or a situation, you may decide to think about you options for the next 6 months rather than make a hasty decision. Instead of “stressing” over thinking you have to make a decision, you can decide to give yourself some time, think about the situation a little more, and then make an informed decision at a later date. Do not confuse this with procrastinating, though. Procrastinating happens when you continually put off doing something or making a decision. Make a date and stick to it.



Write “make a decision” on the flip chart or black board. Pause for discussion.



Make sure the “Stress” list is next to the “Ways To Take Control” list. Go through each item on the “Stress” list and ask the client or group to brainstorm ways to take control of the stress by using the “Ways To Take Control” list. For example, if one of the items on the list is “my husband never does the dishes,” the client or group members may say, “instead of acting out and getting angry, I will tell my husband how I feel and ask him if he will agree to do the dishes when I make dinner.” This would be an example of changing behaviors. You try to communicate rather than reacting with anger.



Review the other items on the list. Continue to brainstorm and allow clients to problem solve. Even if the answers do not fit neatly into a category, allow clients to participate as long as their answers provide positive ways to approach the problem.

So let’s see what we discussed today. We discussed where stress comes from, how it affects our bodies. We also learned a few strategies for managing stress. What I’d like you to do now, is really look at the stress in your lives. Look at where it is coming from each day and how you handle it. At the end of the day, I want you to think about how you handled the stress and if there was any way you could have handled it better.

This process is what we call planning. If you didn't handle stressful situations too well the first time, you have an opportunity to learn from them. You can review what you did right, what you could have done better, and what you plan to do next time. To help you do this, I will give you this Stress Diary worksheet.



Give each client 20 Stress Diary worksheets.

For the next week I'd like you to keep a stress diary. I want you to write down the date and time that you felt stressed, what happened to make you feel stressed, what your reactions were, how you felt, and finally, how you reacted to that stress. For example, let's say your boss yelled at you at work. You would write down

DATE and TIME

Monday, 10 am

PHYSICAL REACTION

My stomach hurt and I had a headache

CIRCUMSTANCES

My boss yelled because I wasn't in the office on-time

THOUGHTS and FEELINGS

It's not my fault there was traffic.

Why is he yelling at me?

ACTIONS

I felt bad. I came home and yelled at my husband because he didn't take out the trash.

In this example you can see how one stressful situation lead to another stressful situation. That is why it is so important to find the real reason behind our stress—so we can break the cycle of stress!

Instead of stopping there, I also want you to think about what you could have done to handle the situation better. For instance, if you were late: 1) you could have immediately apologized for being late, 2) you could have accepted your boss' reprimand, but not yelled at your husband, 3) you could leave 15-20 minutes earlier the next morning, etc. There are a number of ways to handle the situation better so that it is much less stressful for everyone.

Try to do this for the next week. See how it works for you.



Pass out the What Do You Think? handout. Review clients' answers and discuss any concepts that are confusing to clients.

Educational Activities

- Go through deep breathing techniques

Related Lessons

- Reducing Stress 3.2: Using Your Lifestyle to Help Prevent Stress
- Reducing Stress 3.3: Managing Stress More Effectively



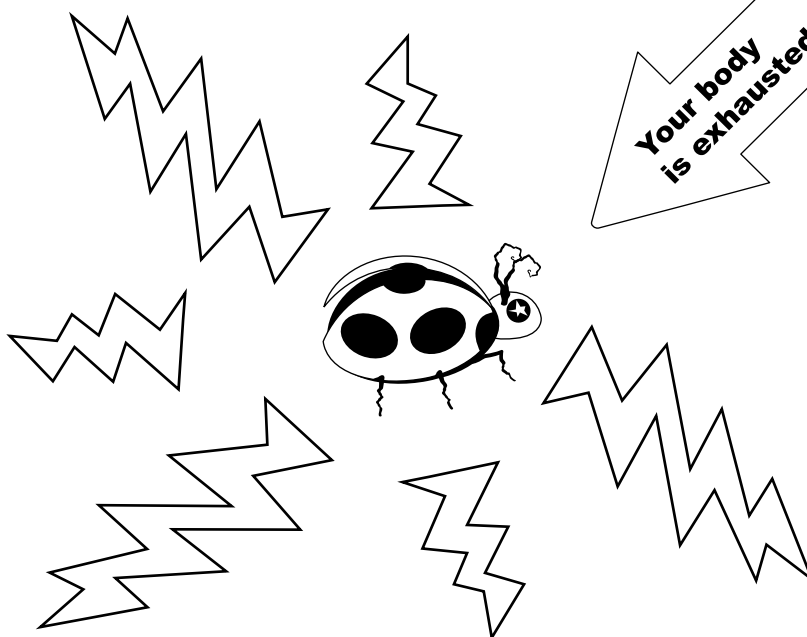


STRESS

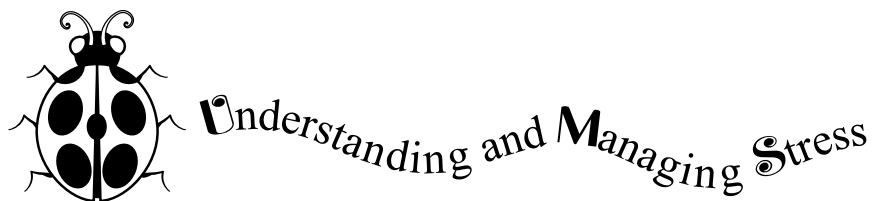
**Your body is
alarmed**

**Your body begins
resisting**

**Your body
is exhausted**



[illegible]

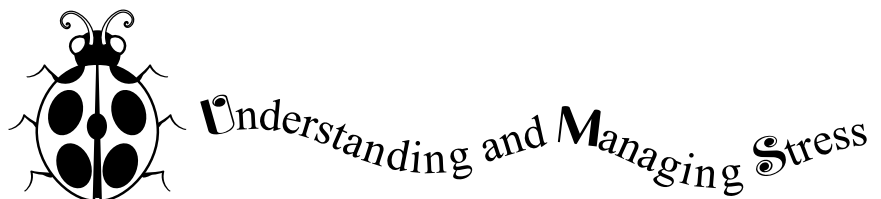


What Do You Think?







Here are a few statements about today's lesson. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Don't Know	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Stress can harm my health.					
I feel like I can manage stress.					
Other people's stress can affect me.					

Healthy Lifestyle Curriculum in Reducing the Risk of Breast Cancer: Reducing Stress 3.1



What Do You Think? Answer Sheet

	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Don't Know	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Healthy Lifestyle Curriculum in Reducing the Risk of Breast Cancer: Reducing Stress 3.1



Using Your Lifestyle to Help Prevent Stress

Lesson Overview

Clients learn how to use lifestyle factors to help manage stress.

Rationale

Stress management helps create a healthy lifestyle.

Goals

Clients will use healthy behaviors to manage stress.

Objectives

- Clients will learn how to use exercise, nutrition, sleep and entertainment to manage stress.

Lesson

Stress has a significant impact on our lives. It can affect our health, our relationships, and it can even affect how we feel about ourselves. The fact is, stress is a reality and we need to learn how to manage it the best way we know how. So today, we're going to discuss lifestyle strategies we can use to manage stress better.

In this lesson we are going to learn how to use our lifestyle to help prevent stress. Before we do that, however, let's review how stress affects our health.



Go over the main points of the **Understanding and Preventing Stress** lesson (Reducing Stress 3.1). Point out that stress causes our blood pressures to rise, intensifies certain conditions—like ulcers, asthma, diabetes—and can even cause certain conditions to develop.

In addition to causing all of this havoc on our bodies, stress also affects how we treat our bodies. For instance, when we feel stressed, we may partake in certain activities that are harmful to our health.

Time

1 1/2 hours

Preparation

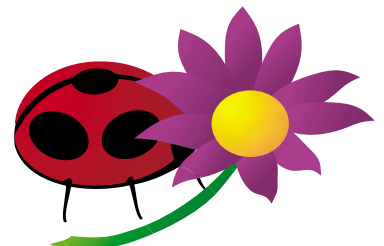
- Review **Understanding and Preventing Stress** lesson (Reducing Stress 3.1)
- Read through the lesson
- Make a list of addiction and counseling specialists

Materials Needed

- Pens or pencils
- Blank pieces of paper
- Chalkboard or flip-chart

Handouts

- Positive Coping/Stress Reduction Behaviors
- How Will I Keep Track of How I Am Doing? (Healthy Eating 1.2)
- How Will I Add Activities Into My Day? (Physical Fitness 2.3)
- What Do You Think?



Using Your Lifestyle to Help Prevent Stress

We may:

- Eat too much or not eat enough
- Exercise less often
- Sleep more or not enough
- Smoke more
- Drink alcohol more often and/or in larger amounts
- Self-medicate with other drugs

Any and all of these activities affect our health in negative ways. If we don't eat properly, our bodies don't get the nutrients they need to function properly. And if we don't eat properly, we may increase our risk of developing many diseases like cancer, diabetes, stroke, and heart disease.

Review the **If I Eat This Many Servings, Won't I Look Like the Food Guide Pyramid?** lesson (Healthy Eating 1.2). Emphasize that our bodies need various nutrients to run properly. We get these nutrients from eating a well-balanced diet. This is the reason why we need to eat a variety of foods in moderation.

Help client(s) prepare a sample menu. Use the How Do I Keep Track of How I Am Doing? worksheet in the **If I Eat This Many Servings, Won't I Look Like the Food Guide Pyramid?** lesson to ensure the client(s) is (are) getting the recommended number of servings of each food category.

In addition to over- or under-nutrition, we may decrease our energy expenditure—in other words, we may not exercise enough. The average adult should exercise 30 minutes per day. Exercising helps keep bones healthy, joints limber, and provides a general sense of well-being.

Review the **Fit at 40 and Beyond** lesson (Physical Fitness 2.3). Emphasize the importance of including a variety of exercises into clients' routines to keep them physically fit. Activities client(s) may want to include in their routines include: walking, water aerobics, chair aerobics, yoga, gardening, etc.

Help client(s) complete the How Will I Add Activities Into My Day? worksheet from the **Fit at 40 and Beyond** lesson. If possible, review their plan at a future meeting.

In addition to providing physical benefits, physical activity provides a sense of general well-being. While you are exercising, your body releases pleasure hormones called endorphins. These endorphins provide a

sense of contentment. Exercise can also fill you with a sense of accomplishment and raise your self-esteem. It can also provide a few minutes a day where you can gather your thoughts, make plans, and resolve problems. Maintaining a regular routine during stressful times is so important.

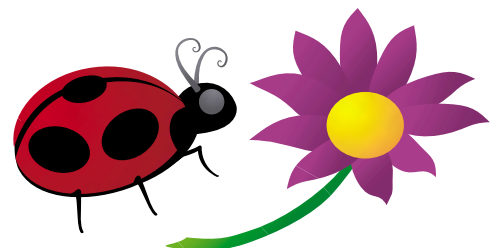
Sleep is another important part of stress prevention. While you are asleep, your body is hard at work. Did you know your body repairs itself while you are asleep? That's right. If you do not get the appropriate amount of sleep, your body cannot repair itself adequately. When you are under a lot of stress, you may find you do not sleep sufficiently. As hard as it may be, try to give yourself the recommended 8 hours of sleep every night. If you are having difficulty sleeping, there are a few things you can try:

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time everyday
- Exercise more than three hours before you go to bed
- Do not drink alcohol before going to bed
- Limit your caffeine intake during the day and in the evening
- Read a book instead of watching television before you go to bed
- Do not watch the television in bed
- Perform relaxation exercises

Other habits and behaviors may be worsen when you are under stress. For instance, you may smoke more cigarettes or use other drugs, like alcohol more frequently. If you find this is happening, you need to look at the root causes of your stress.


Review the **Understanding and Managing Stress** lesson (Reducing Stress 3.1). Remind client(s) that stress comes from many sources. It is important to identify the sources of stress and then prepare an action plan for preventing future stress. One way to do this is to keep a stress diary.

Help client(s) fill out the Stress Diary worksheet in the **Understanding and Managing Stress** lesson (Reducing Stress 3.1). If possible, arrange to meet with client(s) to review the sources of stress, their reactions to those sources of stress, and their plans to react more positively in the future. If you have time, go over the Positive Action Plan worksheet in the **Managing Stress More Effectively** lesson (Reducing Stress 3.3).




Using Your Lifestyle to Help Prevent Stress

If you find that your plans do not work and these habits and behaviors continue, get help. You can call the National Drug and Treatment Routing Service at 1-800-662-HELP to find a local substance abuse treatment center in your area. You can also call your local Alcoholics Anonymous chapter. You can also call the California Smokers Helpline at 1-800-NO-BUTTS for assistance with smoking cessation.

 Review the **Trying To Quit** (Dealing with Addictions 4.1) and the **Are You Drinking in Moderation?** (Dealing with Addictions 4.2) lessons if you think client(s) would benefit.

You can see how harmful stress can be on our health—our blood pressures rise, diseases like asthma or diabetes may worsen, other diseases may develop. Other things may happen to affect our health as well. We may not get the right nutrition, we exercise less, don't sleep well, and indulge in harmful habits.

To prevent the risk of this happening, I prepared four simple points: food, fitness forty winks and fun.


 Write “Food,” “Fitness,” “Forty Winks,” and “Fun” on the flipchart or chalkboard.

It is simple.

- Food. Make sure your body gets the nutrients it needs to function properly. We already made a plan to accomplish this (refer to the How Do I Keep Track of How I Am Doing? worksheet).
- Fitness. Make sure you exercise 30 minutes per day. Again, we already made a plan to do this (refer to the How I Will Add Activities Into My Day? worksheet).
- Forty Winks. Make sure you are getting at least 8 hours of sleep a night. Your body needs to rest and repair itself.
- Fun. It is important to make time for things you enjoy doing—like taking a walk, going to a movie, writing in a journal, listening to music. Think about activities that you enjoy doing and fit them into your schedules.

 Pass out the Positive Coping/Stress Reduction Behaviors handout.

So these four points may look easy, but trying to incorporate them into your lives is the real challenge. But once you do, you will feel the better for it.

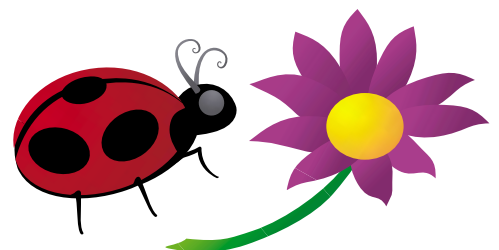
 Pass out the What Do You Think? handout and review clients' answers. Review key points of the lessons again. Leave time for questions.

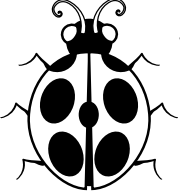
Educational Activities

- Ask a yoga instructor to teach client(s) simple yoga movements.
- Ask a Registered Dietitian (see Ask A Dietitian in Appendix) to give a group presentation on general nutrition.
- Make necessary professional referrals.

Related Lessons

- Reducing Stress 3.1: Understanding and Preventing Stress
- Reducing Stress 3.3: Managing Stress More Effectively
- Healthy Eating 1.2: If I Eat This Many Servings, Won't I Look Like the Food Guide Pyramid?
- Physical Fitness 2.3: Fit at 40 and Beyond
- Dealing with Addictions 4.1: Trying To Quit
- Dealing with Addictions 4.2: Do You Think You May Be A Heavy Drinker?





Positive Coping and Stress Reduction Behaviors

LISTEN TO MUSIC

PRAY

WRITE JOURNAL

PREPARE LIST

MEDITATE

GET INFORMATION

YOGA

**WRITE DOWN THINGS THAT
YOU ARE THANKFUL FOR**

ATTEND A PLAY

ENGAGE IN A HOBBY

WALK, RUN OR OTHER EXERCISE

ASK FOR HELP

LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

GO OUTDOORS

ENJOY NATURE

SEEK OUT OTHERS

HUMOR

GET MORE REST

CONFRONT SITUATION

PLAY

**STRAIGHTEN UP YOUR
ENVIRONMENT**

TRY TO THINK RATIONALLY

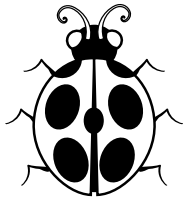
PRACTICE PROBLEM SOLVING

LAUGHTER

STRETCH

**WRITE DOWN THINGS THAT
YOU ARE THANKFUL FOR**

Adapted from The American Heart Association "Life in the Stressed Lane," 1995

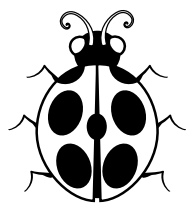


Using Your Lifestyle to Help Prevent Stress

What Do You Think?







Here are a few statements about today's lesson. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Don't Know	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I may feel stressed if I drink alcohol in larger amounts.					
I feel like I can manage stress.					
Sleep can help me manage stress better.					



Using Your Lifestyle to Help Prevent Stress

What Do You Think? Answer Sheet

	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Don't Know	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I may feel stressed if I drink alcohol in larger amounts.					
I feel like I can manage stress.					
Sleep can help me manage stress better.					

Drinking alcohol more often, in larger amounts or self-medicating with other drugs may be a sign a person is not managing stress well.

People who feel stressed may not sleep well. Review strategies for improving sleep.



Managing Stress More Effectively

Lesson Overview

Clients create action plans for managing stress more effectively.

Rationale

Stress management helps create a healthy lifestyle.

Goals

Clients will use action plans to help alleviate stressful situations in their lives.

Objectives

- Clients will learn one technique to prioritize situations in their lives.
- Clients will make an action plan

Lesson

Stress has a significant impact on our lives. It can affect our health, affect our relationships, and can even affect how we feel about ourselves. The fact is, stress is a reality and we need to learn how to manage it the best way we know how. So today, we're going to discuss strategies we can use to manage stress so that it doesn't feel so overwhelming.

Let's briefly review how stress affects our bodies.



Go over the main points of the **Understanding and Preventing Stress** lesson (Reducing Stress 3.1). Point out that stress causes our blood pressures to rise, intensifies certain conditions—like ulcers, asthma, diabetes—and can even cause certain conditions to develop.

Now that we know how detrimental stress can be to our health, let's discuss one strategy for managing it better.



Time

1 1/2 hours

Preparation

- Review **Understanding and Preventing Stress** lesson (Reducing Stress 3.1)
- Read through the lesson
- Make copies of the Positive Action Plan

Materials Needed

- Pens or pencils
- One blank piece of paper for client(s)
- Chalkboard or flip-chart

Handouts

- Positive Action Plan
- Tips for Managing Stress

Managing Stress More Effectively

As we mentioned before, stress comes from many different sources. It can come from family, friends, work, living arrangements, money, not to mention other daily trials and tribulations. One way to try to manage all these sources of stress is to make an action plan. An action plan is like a roadmap. It outlines where you want to go and how you want to get there.



Pass out the Positive Action Plan worksheet.

To make an action plan, you must first decide what it is you want to accomplish. What are your personal goals? Think about that for a moment and write down one goal after the section that says, “I will. . . .”



Give client(s) 3-5 minutes to think about a personal goal.

Now, think about when you would like to accomplish this goal. Let's take an example. Let's say you want to quit smoking. After “I will. . . ,” write, quit smoking. Now, in the section that says, “By when. . . ,” write by November 12, 20xx. Now, think about what will help you to reach that goal. Things that may help include:

- Throwing out ashtrays
- Buying packs of cigarettes instead of cartons
- Making a doctor's appointment to discuss nicotine replacements
- Making a dental appointment
- Buying myself a gift with the money I save

These are examples of things that you could do to help your success. Write that down after “What will I need to do to make my success more likely?” Now think about things that may make it difficult for you to reach your personal goal. Write these things under “Roadblocks.” Using our previous example, things that may make it difficult to quit include:

- My spouse smokes
- My friends smoke
- Smoking allows me to take a break at work
- Smoking calms me down

Now think of ways you can overcome those barriers. Like:

- My spouse smokes so I will ask him/her not to smoke in the house
- My friends smoke so I will ask them not to offer me a cigarette

- Instead of smoking during my break, I will take a 10 minute walk
- When I get upset I will take a deep breath and count to 10

Write this in the “How I will overcome them” section. Can you see the plan forming? Not only did we go over what we wanted to accomplish (quit smoking by November 12, 20xx), we looked at things that will help us reach our goal. Just as important, we looked at things that will make it difficult. But instead of stopping there, we took it one step farther—we also made a plan for overcoming the things that may interfere with reaching our goal.



Pause and allow client(s) to ask questions. If the client(s) still seem unclear, go through another example. Ask client(s) to use a personal example. Help client(s) as necessary.

Like any other good plan you need to ask yourself—did it work?, if not, why not?, what can be done differently? Once you review what happened, you can make another action plan. For instance, if it is November 21, 20xx and you still smoke, ask yourself why. Answers may be:

- I went out with my friends and I smoked one cigarette
- I stopped to talk to my friends during break time instead of going for a walk

Now think about what you need to do to overcome these new barriers. You might:

- Go out with friends who do not smoke for a few weeks
- Use another entrance and exit so you do not go past people who smoke during break time

Do you see how one action plan leads into another one? This is why action plans are so helpful. Action plans can help us during times of stress; they are tools we can use to define personal goals and troubleshoot ways to overcome things that may get in the way of reaching those goals. Since we already have a plan in place, we may be less likely to get stressed when something unexpected happens.

Another way to handle stress more effectively is to prioritize the different things we need to do. When we prioritize, we rank tasks according to their importance or the amount of time we have to do something. For instance, you may have 10 bills—let’s say 2 are due on the 10th, 3 are due on the 12th, and 5 are due by the 30th. Let’s say money is a little tight this month. You may choose to prioritize payments. If you are paid on the 15th and the 30th of each month, you could pay the first 5 bills with the first paycheck (2 are due on the 10th and 3 are due on the 12th) and the last 5 with the last paycheck (due by the 30th). By doing that, you have prioritized your bills. You may still feel a bit stressed financially, but at least you have a plan in place. By know-



Managing Stress More Effectively

ing you have a plan in place, you may at least diminish some of the stress you feel. And like we said, the key to managing stress is controlling it as much as possible. When we are able to take some control over stress, we may not feel as overwhelmed.

So, we prioritized on thing—paying bills. For most of us, we have more than one thing that is causing stress in our lives. This is where prioritizing comes in handy. Take a moment and list all the major things causing stress in your life.



Give client(s) 10 minutes to write the list(s). If people are having difficulty, name some of the common sources of stress:

- Family
- Work
- Community
- Major life events (i.e., wedding, divorce, funeral)
- Money
- Time



Ask client(s) if stress is coming from any of these sources. Remind client(s) that sometimes stress can be very subtle. For instance, client(s) may be worried about having enough money to buy groceries this month, pay the light bill, go to the doctor, buy gas for the car.

Now, look at your list and decide what needs to be done today or the next day. Write a number 1 next to those things. Now, look at your list and decide what needs to be done within the next week. Write a number 2 next to those items. Now, decide which things can wait for a week or so. Place a number 3 next to those items. Look at your list again and group all the things you wrote a number 1 next to. Group all the number 2s together and all the number 3s together. The things listed in group number 1 need to be done immediately. The things grouped in number 2 need to be done after group 1 but before group 3. Finally, group 3 needs to be done, but those things can wait until you have completed groups 1 and 2. An example:

PRIORITY	ACTION
3	Get the oil changed
1	Cash check
2	Buy groceries
1	Meet with Rosa's teacher
2	Pay bills (electrical, gas, credit cards)
2	Schedule doctor's appointment
1	Watch neighbor's children

2 Finish laundry

Other:

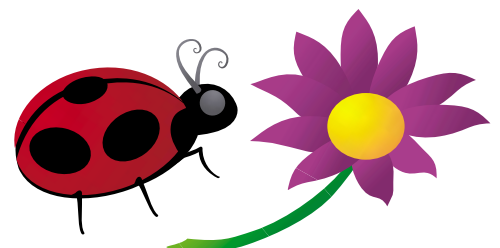
Other:

You may notice that you can break some tasks into smaller parts. For example, if you need to take your car to the mechanic, you can make a mini priority list. First you need to make the appointment (priority 1). Then you may need to ask for time off of work to drop off the car (priority 2). You may also need to find an alternative route to work (priority 2 too). By making this mini priority list, you may not feel like this is as overwhelming as if you merely made a mental list all the things you need to do.

Once you have your priority list, you can make a To Do list. You can use this priority list to make a daily or weekly schedule. Instead of feeling like you have to do everything RIGHT NOW, you will know what you need to do this week, next week, and the week after that. Things may change, but at least you have a general plan.

Other things you can do to help manage stress are:

- Break tasks into smaller steps.
- Match things that need to be done with the time available to do them. For instance, if you need to be at work fifteen minutes after your bus arrives, you may want to re-schedule your appointment for a later time. The bus may be late and it would be a shame for you to travel all the way to the clinic and miss your appointment. You could try to give yourself a 1/2 hour cushion.
- Combine similar trips with tasks.
- Delegate as much as possible.
- Avoid “time-wasters.”
- Ask for help.
- Admit to yourself when you have too many things on your plate.
- Learn to say “no.”
- Slow down and concentrate on one project at a time.
- Make long-term and short-term goals. They must be reasonable and manageable.
- Enhance social support.
- Talk with loved ones.
- Visit friends and family.
- Make time for things you enjoy doing.
- Exercise to ‘work it all out.’
- Improve personal control.
- Improve communication and reduce passiveness.



Managing Stress More Effectively



Pass out Tips for Managing Stress. Review each bullet point and give client(s) specific examples.

When you begin to feel stressed, think about the different ways you can manage stress. Remember—a certain amount of stress in our lives is good. It is when this stress becomes overwhelming that it becomes harmful. It is when it starts creeping in that direction that you need to first identify what is stressing you, manage it, and then think of ways to prevent it in the future.

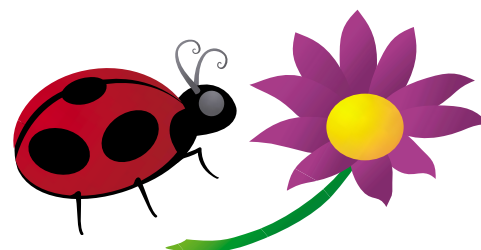
For the next week, try to put your action plan into effect and see how well it works for you. If there are problems, think about alternatives to manage it better.

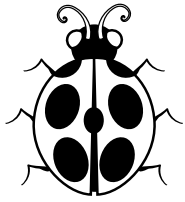


Review the key points of the lesson. If possible, make an appointment to review client(s) Positive Action Plan worksheets.

Related Lessons

- Reducing Stress 3.1: Understanding and Managing Stress
- Reducing Stress 3.2: Using Your Lifestyle to Help Prevent Stress





Positive Action Plan

Make a positive action plan for one thing you would like to accomplish.

I will _____

By when _____

What will I need to do to make my success more likely?

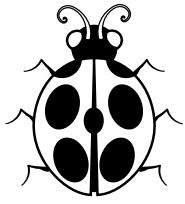
Roadblocks

How I will overcome them

Did the plan work?

If not, why not?

What can I do differently next time?



Tips for Managing Stress

- Break tasks into smaller steps
- Match things that need to be done with time available to do them
- Combine similar trips with tasks
- Delegate as much as possible
- Avoid “time-wasters”
- Ask for help
- Admit to yourself when you have too many things on your plate
- Learn to say “no”
- Slow down and concentrate on one project at a time
- Make long-term and short-term goals
- Enhance social support
- Talk with loved ones
- Visit friends and family
- Make time for things you enjoy doing
- Exercise to ‘work it all out’